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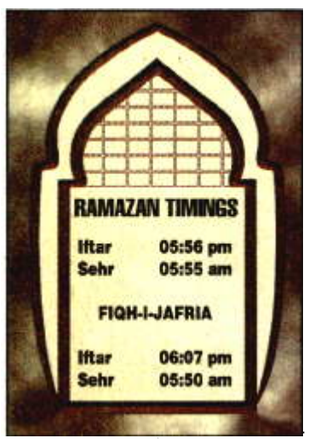

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Illegal immigrants: World in Focus

Water scarcity

WATER supply to different parts of Karachi remains affected for a third consecutive day on Friday due to power failure at the pumping stations of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. — Page 2

35 holdups

TWO people were murdered and 35 holdups, including 27 of vehicles, have been committed in Karachi. — Page 3

Occupied state land

PUNJAB Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has issued orders for proceedings against those illegally occupying state land around the housing project of Rawalpindi Development Authority at Lohi Bhair. A grand operation would be carried out to get the land vacated by mafia. —Page 7

Also: First book bank opened in Pindi

Resolution

OPPOSITION MNA Naveed Qamar raised an important point of order on Friday after the question hour, on the issue pertaining to the opposition's resolution of disapproval of the ordinances on military courts, which has not been brought before the house yet . —Page 9

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Indian navy chief

THE Indian government's silence on the dismissal of its naval chief has given rise to much speculation. —Page 16

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SECP formed

THE federal government notifies the establishment of long-awaited Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan.—Page 17

Korda's decision

CZECH Petr Korda has put off plans to retire, saying he wants to be remembered for his tennis rather than a positive dope test for steroids. —Page 22

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iMAGES

Police kill 13-year-old student in custody

By Niaz Mohammad Khan

SANGHAR, Jan 1: Two personnel of Shahpur Chakar police were arrested hours after a police party shot dead a sixth-class student during a raid carried out in Gahno Khan Mangwano village, Sanghar district, on Friday.

Thirteen-year-old Chanesar Khan, the only child of Mohammad Bux, was a student of Government High School, Chak No 4, near Head Jamrao.

The murder shook the small community and about 100 villagers took the dead to Mangli police station, demanding the registration of FIR against the personnel involved.

Narrating the tale, the uncle of the victim, Allah Wasayo, said that six or seven policemen headed by ASI Shabbir Lashari came to the village early in the morning and laid a siege to the house of Mohammad Bux, who was not home.

The police resorted to heavy shooting, creating harassment in the neighbourhood before storming into the house where they caught hold of the boy and dragged him onto their mobile, said Mr Wasayo.

He claimed that the villagers tried to rescue the boy but the police again opened fire, hitting the boy who was injured. The police then tried to leave the scene but the villagers pleaded with them to take the boy to hospital. The police agreed.

Two men, Pyaro and Yaqoob, boarded the mobile with the boy but the police, according to the accompanying villagers, took the wounded to Shahpur Chakar police station, instead of a hospital, where the teenager died owing to profuse bleeding.

The two men took the body to Mangli police station, in whose limits their village fell, to lodge an FIR but the police refused. Others villagers also gathered at the police station.

In the meantime, SDM Nazeer Hussain Jamali reached there and it was only after he had warned the duty officer of "stern action" that the case was registered under Section 302 of the PPC.

Meanwhile, ASI Lashari, who had surrendered to Sanghar police, was brought to Mangli police station and sent behind bars.

The SHO of Shahpur Chakar told the journalists that constable Ali Nawaz Naich, who allegedly fired at the boy, was arrested while the rest of the personnel involved were still at large.

ASI'S CLAIM: ASI Lashari said that the village had been raided on the compliant of a person, Mahram, that three women of his family were abducted by some people of Mangwana community.

During the raid, the ASI claimed, a "man" from Mangwana tribe, identified as Chanesar, was arrested and when the police were taking him along they were attacked by a mob and Chanesar tried to snatch a rifle from a policeman, Ali Nawaz Naich, who shot and injured him.

The ASI failed to give any satisfactory answer when asked why Shahpur Chakar police carried out the raid in the jurisdiction of Mangli police without informing the officials concerned.

62 perish in Lanka fighting

COLOMBO, Jan 1: Sri Lanka said on Friday 62 people, most of them Tamil Tiger rebels, had been killed in the east of the country during an operation by government troops.

A defence ministry statement said the troops backed by artillery fire had conducted a limited operation on Thursday in Pulipanchikal in the eastern Batticaloa district.

It quoted a rebel transmission monitored by troops as saying that 58 rebels were killed, and added that 4 more where killed.—Reuters

Other high-profile cases to be referred within 48 hours

Said's case being sent to MTC today: PM

KARACHI, Jan 1: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif disclosed on Friday that the cases relating to the murder of Hakim Mohammad Said and Maulana Salahuddin would be referred to the military courts for trial tomorrow.

Several other high-profile murder cases like those of former MNA Zohair Akram Nadeem, KESC chief Malik Shahid Hamid, education board chairman Ismail Memon, Col Bilal, and two sons of a former SP Azizur Rehman, would also be sent to these courts within the next 24 to 48 hours, he said.

Mr Sharif made this statement to newsmen after presiding over a high-level meeting on law and order at the Governor's House here on Friday.

Governor Moinuddin Haider, Interior Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Labour and Manpower Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, prime minister's principal secretary Saeed Mehdi, Sindh chief secretary Salik Nazir Ahmad, federal and provincial home secretaries, IG, Sindh, the DIG Karachi, the DG rangers, and the chief of the citizen-police liaison committee (CPLC), Jameel Yousuf, also attended the meeting.

Official sources said during the meeting the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the performance of military courts and it was decided that the number of these courts would be increased.

The meeting was informed that of the 49 cases sent to the military courts 12 were being proceeded on, while judgment had been delivered in four cases.

Sources said the provincial administration had been directed to complete the investigations into the murder of Iranian cadets and the Americans on priority basis.

The meeting also decided to review all the appointments made in the provincial government in violation of the prescribed procedure and re-evaluate the qualification of such officials.

Talking to the newsmen Mr Sharif said military courts were performing satisfactorily and the criminals were being given the punishments they deserved.

The prime minister also expressed satisfaction over the law and order situation in Karachi which, he said, had improved. "Government's steps to improve the situation were bearing positive

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results and the performance of police and administration showed mark improvement under the guidance of the governor."

He said the government had succeeded in apprehending notorious criminals and the military courts were trying them. He assured that the government was sincerely working for restoration of peace in Karachi. "The people of Karachi have taken a sigh of relief because the city's economic activities have increased along with the investment reducing the unemployment levels," said the premier.

To a question he said the law and order and the national economy were his government's top priorities for the year 1999. — PPI/NNI

Baloch and Sindhis

Concession offered for joining army

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, Jan 1: The government on Friday disclosed that 10,000 positions in armed forces are currently vacant for the residents of Balochistan and interior of Sindh.

"The people of these areas are not joining army," Chaudhry Khurshid Zaman, parliamentary secretary for defence, told the National Assembly on Friday. He asked the parliamentarians to motivate the people of these areas to join the defence services.

He said that the government had offered special concessions to the people of Balochistan and interior of Sindh to join army but they were still not interested to join it.

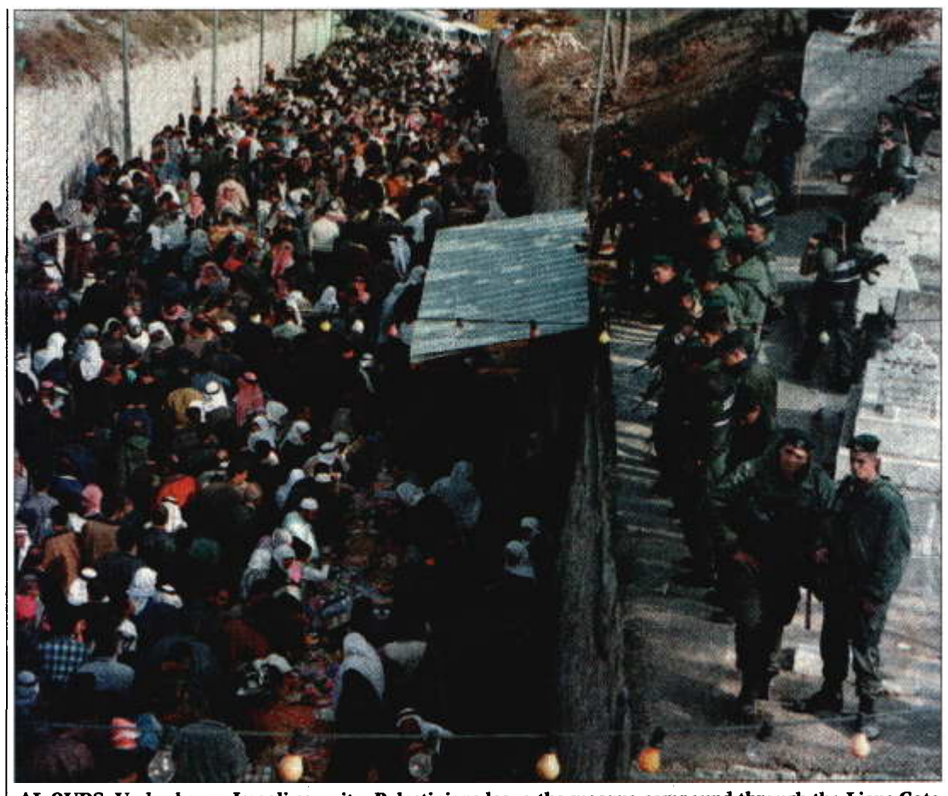
The selection criteria for Balochistan and interior of Sindh was also lenient as compared to Punjab and NWFP, only to encourage the people of these areas to get recruited, he added. Zaman explained that criteria for Punjab and NWFP required matriculation as the minimum qualification and 5 feet 6 inches as the least height. However, in case of Balochistan and interior of Sindh the minimum qualification had been reduced to middle and least height had been brought down to 5 feet and 4 inches.

Zaman was responding to a question of Shakeel Ahmed, MNA who was interested in knowing whether the government was planning to establish more army recruitment centres in Balochistan. Zaman said the government was opening up new centres but without getting adequate response.

He said unlike Punjab and NWFP, mobile teams of local commanders were constituted in these areas to recruit in places where army selection and recruitment centres were not located.

Currently, he said, a total of four army selection and recruitment centre were operating in Balochistan. These included two in Quetta and one each in Loralai and Khuzdar.

He disclosed that opening of an additional recruitment centre at Turbat was currently under consideration of the government and was likely to be established during this year.



AL QUDS: Under heavy Israeli security, Palestinians leave the mosque compound through the Lions Gate here, after the second Friday prayers of Ramazan. More than 250,000 Muslims from Israel and the Palestinian areas had gathered for the prayers. —AFP

Indian firing across LoC claims 2 lives

By Our Correspondent

MUZAFFARABAD, Jan 1: On the first day of the new year on Friday Indian troops fired shells on three villages of Azad Kashmir from across the line of control (LoC), killing two persons and injuring four others, official sources here said.

The Indian troops at about 12 noon on Friday targeted Polas, Chafur and Kaputa villages in Abbaspur sector of southern Poonch district with mortar guns, killing Muneeza Begum, 30, wife of Mohammad Shabbir, and Mohammad Sher, 35, son of Lal Deen, sources said.

Gulab Bibi, wife of Lal Deen and Zulaikha Bibi, wife of Mohammad Kabir, were critically injured in Chafar village while Shehnaz, wife of Mohammad Zubair, was injured in Kaputa village, they said.

A woman, Kali, wife of Alam Din, was injured and the house of Mohammad Shafi was completely destroyed at Nagdar village, in Athmuqam sector of Neelum Valley, north-east of Muzaffarabad, the sources said.

Eight die in communal clashes

NEW DELHI, Jan 1: Eight people have died this week in violence resulting from Hindu-Muslim clashes in two Indian states, state radio and domestic news agencies reported on Friday.

Five people died and 50 were wounded in of Karnataka in religious clashes, All India Radio said.

The state radio said the clashes took place in the town of Suratkal, some 280kms from Bangalore.

It quoted Chief Minister J.H. Patel as saying that stringent action would be taken against those who inflamed religious passions. A curfew was imposed in the town, near Mangalore port.

Press Trust of India (PTI) said three people were stabbed to death on Thursday in Suratkal and two people had died earlier, one of them in police firing to quell Hindu-Muslim clashes sparked by a minor quarrel

In other incidents of inter-religious violence, one person was killed in police firing on Thursday at Amod town in Gujarat, officials said.—Reuters

Bid to show rise in revenue: Nisar

Petroleum items being sold at higher prices

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, Jan 1: The minister for petroleum, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, on Friday admitted that the government was selling petroleum products to consumers at much higher prices only to show higher revenues.

"There is a big gap between the actual cost of petroleum products and their prices in the open market," he said and added that "for the last several years a culture has developed where the petroleum products are sold on much higher rates only to show higher revenues."

Responding to a question by Baboo Ghulam Hussain in the National Assembly, the minister, however, clarified that the prices of petroleum products were set by the finance ministry. "The petroleum ministry has nothing to do with it," he said.

Chaudhry Nisar informed the house that the prices of petroleum in 1998 had been almost three times higher than what they had been in 1987. He said the prices of regular and super petrol in June 1987 had been Rs7.15 and Rs7.72 per litre, but in July 1998 those prices had risen to Rs22.19 and Rs23.64.

The prices of petroleum products had been increased 17 times and decreased twice since June 1987. In 1996 alone the prices had changed eight times.

About oil and gas explorations in the country, he said 13 recoveries had been made during the last one-and-a-half years, which were expected to add four to six billion cubic feet gas to the existing supply. He said the gas was available to only 14 per cent of the people but the government was trying to supply it to the maximum possible number of people.

In view of the limitations of indigenous supply of natural gas and the new fuel strategy that aims at reducing the import of oil through natural gas substitution, he said, the government was considering a number of proposals for import of gas from Turkmenistan, Iran, Qatar and the UAE on the basis of the lowest gas price and delivery time.

He made it clear that the government had not foreclosed any gas import options. "Our main consideration is the lowest landed price and earliest delivery time," he minister said, and added that "a gas pricing framework and gas delivery price has been finalized for import of gas from Turkmenistan. This gas delivery price will serve as a benchmark for future price agreements."

In response to a question about the implementation of duly approved schemes, he said the gas companies were currently facing serious liquidity problems owing the to non-payment of their bills by WAPDA/KESC, and added that as soon as their financial position would improve they would start work on the approved schemes of gas.

8 regional centres for ID cards being set up

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, Jan 1: National Data Base Organisation is setting up eight regional centres under the direct supervision of Pakistan army for issuance of new national identity cards and computerization of demographic data collected during census this year.

The regional centres which will be established in eight major cities — Lahore, Multan, Sargodha, Karachi, Quetta, Sukkur, Peshawar and Islamabad — will be manned by an acting brigadier assisted by a Lt. Colonel or a Colonel and two majors.

National Data Base having the status of autonomous body will generate funds for its operations by charging an amount of Rs90 each for the issuance of a new computerised Identity Cards.

The NDBO during the last census had collected around 65 million forms from all over the country. The data collected through these forms will be computerised. New identity cards will be issued on the basis of this data.

The cards will be delivered through couriers and before handing over the card the courier will receive Rs90 per identity card. Fauji Foundation is expected to get the contract for production of the new identity cards.

The plan of issuing new fool proof cards has been pending for over a decade. Under the first government of Benazir Bhutto, a contract was awarded to a foreign computer company but later, it was cancelled by Nawaz Sharif government.

Demographic experts have designed demographic data base after studying experience of various countries including America, Denmark and some other developed countries, said a source.

It will be totally different from the other countries as it has been designed after studying all such programmes of different countries, he added.

With the computerised data base all the details about any resident of Pakistan including his property, his arms license, number of vehicle (s) owned by him and other information could be obtained by one push of button, he said.

A great deal of skepticism, however, prevails as to how they the organisation would complete the gargantuan task of feeding 65 million forms into the computer.

The information collected through the national data base forms would further verify the population census figures the authenticity of which has been questioned by different political parties, particularly those belonging to the smaller provinces, the source added.

Palestinians stopped from rebuilding homes

KAFAL AL-HARETH (West Bank), Jan 1: The Israeli army prevented a group of Israeli peace activists on Friday from helping to rebuild two Palestinian homes which it demolished on Monday.

Troops declared this village, about 30 kilometres north of Al Quds, close to the Jewish settlement of Ariel, a closed military zone, and forbade entry to 25 activists of the "Committee against House Demolitions" and to journalists.

A military spokesman said the ban was for "security reasons."

The houses that were destroyed were home to twelve people, including eight children.

When the inhabitants refused to leave, the army used tear gas to drive them out before bulldozers flattened the buildings.

On Friday the families set up tents on the ruins of their homes and unfurled banners reading: "Is this a just peace?" They brought bulldozers to clear the rubble in order to rebuild.

In the past three weeks, Israel has confiscated thousands of acres in the area in order to pave a new bypass road to Ariel.

The army often demolishes houses that are built without permits. Palestinians say that they have little choice because Israel rarely grants building permits to their people.

Israel has destroyed nearly 700 Palestinian houses since the signing of the 1993 Oslo accords with the Palestinians, according to the Palestinian committee on land and the environment.

About 2,000 other houses have been ordered demolished, the committee said.

Another Israeli pacifist group, the Peace Bloc (Gush Shalom), said it would go to the village on Saturday to help with the rebuilding.—AFP

Fog again hits flights

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, Jan 1: After a clear sunny day heavy fog suddenly descended on the city an hour or so after sunset on Friday.

The development forced an immediate cancellation of flights at Lahore airport. Rail traffic and intra-city bus services were also affected.

The fog reduced visibility to 50 metres at 7:25pm and then to 10 metres at 8:30pm.

Lahore and many other cities of the Punjab are being affected by fog for the past over two weeks causing several fatal road accidents. Four senior government officials were also killed when a Punjab government helicopter crashed in Lahore due to poor visibility.

Friday's fog came earlier than the previous days when it began to form around midnight. Its early descent on Friday evening increased the chill. In the morning fog cleared at 11:00am after reducing visibility to a minimum of 10 metres at around 8:00am.

The minimum temperature was 2.5 degrees centigrade with 92 per cent humidity in the morning and 67 per cent in the evening.

The director, Meteorological department, Shoukat Ali Awan, said fog developed early because a clear evening fast evaporated the warmth of earth.

He said dry weather had been causing foggy conditions in Pakistan and India during December. It will eliminate as soon as it rains, he said.

Mr Awan said a secondary westerly disturbance was passing through southern Iran but at the moment it was hard to say whether it will cause rain in Pakistan during the next 36 hours or not.

King Hussein to meet Clinton

HILTON HEAD (South Carolina), Jan 1: King Hussein of Jordan will meet President Bill Clinton next Tuesday at the White House, presidential spokeswoman Amy Weiss said on Thursday.

The two men will discuss the embattled Middle East peace process and US-Jordanian issues, she indicated from the president's vacation retreat here.

But she did not confirm reports of a forthcoming summit between Clinton and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Washington in March or April next year, as announced on Thursday by Palestinian minister Saeb Erakat.

The King has been convalescing at one of his homes in Washington for the past few days after receiving cancer treatment.—AFP

LHCBA resolution improper, says AG

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, Jan 1: Advocate-General Ashtar Ausaf Ali, who is also ex- officio chairman of the Punjab Bar Council, has described the proceedings and resolution of Thursday's general body meeting of the Lahore High Court Bar Association as 'highly improper and violative of the professional organization's mandate.'

Talking to *Dawn* on Friday, he said: " The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act does not empower any Bar association or council to demand removal of judges. The conduct of judges is definitely outside the scope of professional organization of lawyers. Even the legislatures are barred from discussing the conduct of judges on the floor of the house."

Citing a Supreme Court judgment, the AG said even the misbehaviour of a judge did not justify a contemptuous report. He pointed out that the total membership of the LHCBA exceeded 7000, and if at all the LHCBA executive had decided to consider a lawyer's grievance

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against a judge, it should have given a proper and adequate notice of the matter to all its members. The issue was too important to be the subject of an ad hoc agenda and a hurriedly-called meeting of a few hundred LHCBA members, Mr Ali said.

The LHCBA, he added, should have exercized restraint after a high-level Bar delegation's meeting with the chief justice of Pakistan on Wednesday. There should have been proper appreciation of facts and, as in the past, the matter should have been referred to a committee. The resolution, as reported in the press, lacked balance and reflected poorly on its movers' sense of proportion, he added. Many of its contents were simply unworthy of consideration by an august organization like the LHCBA, the AG said.

Mr ALi hoped that the matter would be reconsidered by the LHCBA in a cool and dispassionate manner so that it could be resolved without further straining the Bar-Bench relations and kicking up more dust.

LEGAL NOTICE: Meanwhile, describing the LHCBA meeting and resolution as 'extremely irregular', Dr Abdul Basit has issued a legal notice to the LHCBA asking it to call a fresh meeting to reconsider the matter. He said the members did not have due notice of Thursday's meeting, effective steps were not taken to exclude unauthorized persons from participation in the meeting and 'votes were not counted by individual roll call.'

Describing Justice Ramday as a symbol of integrity, Dr Basit said he would be compelled to approach the high court against LHCBA if his demand was not accepted by it.